Gaming for social connected-ness

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During this difficult global period, people all around the world are being asked to practice "*social distancing*". Whoever came up with that concept probably didn't really think it through. What is the meaning of "social"? Why didn't they just call it "*physical distancing*"? It's a time that's been a struggle for many people, and so the term "social distancing" is having some negative effects. But what's important to remember, is we need to be socially CONNECTED, while staying physically DISTANT.

Lucky for us, we live in an age of digital technology.

Photo by Nicole Cleary

Our digital era has provided us with the capability to connect with people from all around the world, without the need to be physically present. Whilst this in itself was considered a negative by many traditional organisations, those same companies are now viewing it as a blessing. Whilst you need to be physically distant from people, we can use technology to connect to our family and friends. Video calls, virtual parties, online coffee chats, streaming, and of course video gaming have all become part of our everyday lives. But what's different about video gaming compared to the others? How does gaming keep us sane, positive, and connected more so than other forms of digital content?

Photo by James Murphy

Gaming by its very nature is all about interacting with a virtual world. Couple that with any kind of multiplayer aspect, and you get a digital world where you can interact with friends, family, and complete strangers. This is a blessing in an age where it’s unsafe, and in lots of cases, illegal to interact with our physical world. No longer are we constrained by our physical limitations, of not being able to visit the people we care about, not being able to play sport, and not having entertainment of any kind (threatre, cinemas, etc.) Gaming can be a great way to have those interactions.

Photo by Ben Thomson (VICE Media)

Jumping online to play a game helps people overcome a lot of the anxiety and stress during our current times. A good run on Forza, teaming up with friends in Fortnite, or sailing the oceans in Sea of Thieves can be the difference between a good day and a bad day. In the gaming world, people laugh, teams strategise, players think about what they want to do and what they want to achieve. That’s one of the best things about video gaming. Like life, you can choose how you want to play the game. Will you take up your saber and become a jedi? Or will you discover the origins of Locust, or perhaps even see the world through Lara Croft’s eyes? There’s something for everyone on Xbox and this is one of the best ways to stay connected during this difficult time.

Photo by PLE Computers

Encourage your friends and family who maybe haven’t picked up a game in a while to play with you. Explore, discover, and build together. Create happy memories so you can look back on this time without complete remorse. Even though it’s a digital world, the memories you create and the people you connect with are 100% real. Never forget that. Just because something is virtual, doesn’t make it fake. There are many people around the world watching and playing video games right now. Many of those same people shunned gaming as a bad addiction. But it doesn’t have to be.

Photo by HIVE Gaming

Let’s show the world how awesome gaming is, and how it can bring people together and spread happiness, even at the worst of times.